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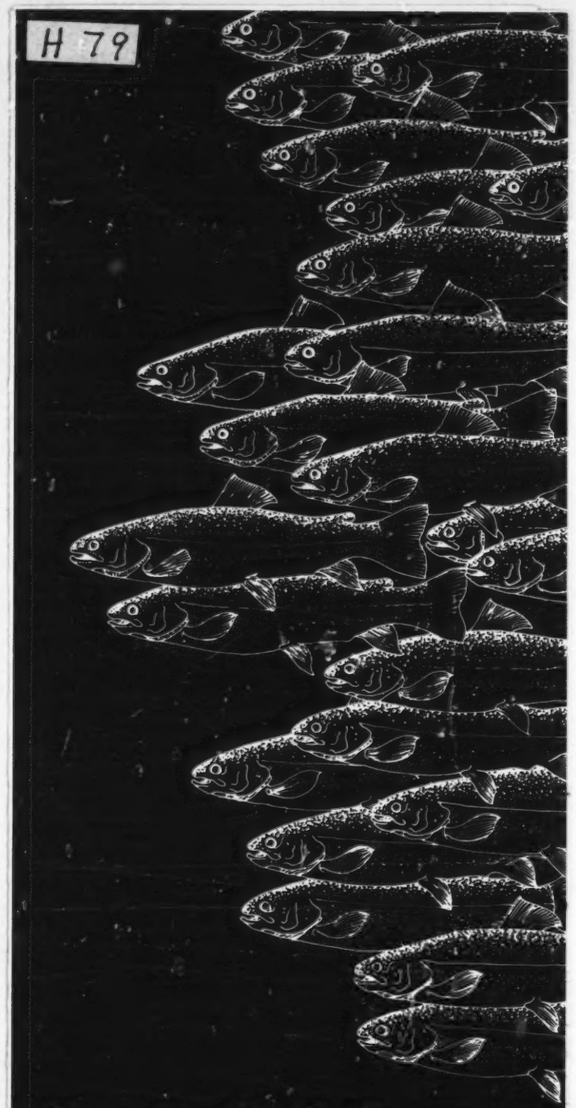

hotchkiss
national fish hatchery

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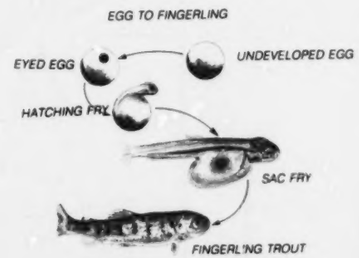
FISHERMAN'S DREAM

Fishing for rainbow trout in reservoir waters throughout the west has become a very popular form of recreation. Western Colorado has some fine reservoirs that offer excellent fishing for the scrappy rainbow.

However, trout need the gravel bottoms of rushing streams and rivers to reproduce. The disappearance of these natural spawning areas, as a result of reservoir development, has drastically lowered trout populations. Thus, to provide recreational fishing in western Colorado, reservoirs must be stocked. Hotchkiss National Fish Hatchery aids in maintaining trout populations by stocking approximately 1,200,000 trout annually, ranging from 2 to 9 inches in length. The trout are stocked into various reservoirs of the Colorado River Storage Project in southwestern Colorado, such as Blue Mesa, Crawford, Silverjack, and Lemon.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service photos.
Upper left: taking eggs from a female trout.
Center left: Mixing sperm and eggs.
Lower left: trout eggs. Photo by E.P. Haddon.
Below: trout fry.
Lower right: Hotchkiss hatchery.

THE HATCHERY

Hotchkiss National Fish Hatchery is located about 20 miles east of Delta, Colorado, near the town of Hotchkiss. The hatchery was authorized by Congress in 1956, but it was not until January 1969, that the rearing of fish was begun in the newly constructed facilities. The primary source of water for the hatchery is Tommy Dowell Spring. Interestingly, the spring was created in the 1930's by an earthquake near Salt Lake City that also affected the Hotchkiss area.

Hotchkiss National Fish Hatchery consists of a hatchery building with a small Visitor Center and a Tank Room, residences, 32 outside concrete raceways, and 6 earthen ponds. Tommy Dowell Spring, which supplies hatchery water, is located on the hillside next to the hatchery. The spring has a constant water temperature of 56° F and flows from 1,600 to 4,000 gallons per minute. The water is reused several times throughout the hatchery facility.

FISHERY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Two years prior to anticipated stocking needs, fish management biologists advise the Manager of Hotchkiss National Fish Hatchery of the size and number of rainbow trout that are to be stocked in each reservoir. Several factors are used to determine numbers and sizes of fish to be stocked in each body of water: the correct time of year; the size of the reservoir; anticipated fisherman use; and available food supplies. The Hatchery Manager then develops a program for raising fish to stock each reservoir.

Rainbow trout eggs are received for hatching at Hotchkiss National Fish Hatchery from various sources throughout the United States. After the eggs hatch, the young fish are placed into concrete tanks in the hatchery building and are fed special trout diets. Feeding is first done by hand, then automatic feeders take over the work. When the fish are 1½ to 2 inches in length, they are moved to outside raceways where they grow to the proper size for stocking.

When the fish are ready for stocking, they are

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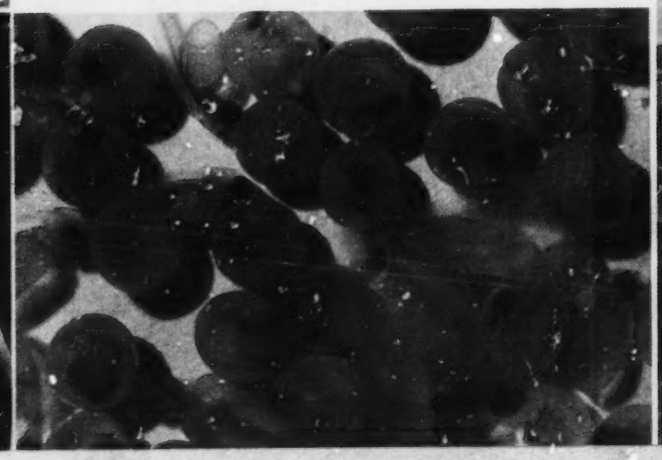

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pumped by a mechanical loader into a distribution truck. The distribution truck is equipped with oxygen and circulating pumps. The water in the tank, when kept cool and well-supplied with oxygen, will hold large numbers of trout for many hours.

REGIONAL FISH DISTRIBUTION UNIT

The Regional Fish Distribution Unit, a large capacity fish transportation truck used by many of the fish hatcheries in the Rocky Mountain Region, is stationed at Hotchkiss National Fish Hatchery. This unit consists of a 42-foot flatbed tractor/trailer with seven 700-gallon tanks. The life support system, which allows transportation of large numbers and weights of fish over long distances, consists of 14 electric aerators and two liquid-oxygen bottles weighing 600 pounds each.

This unit is used for stocking large reservoirs with fish throughout Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Wyoming, Montana, and North Dakota, and is a very cost-effective and efficient method of transporting fish. It would take seven individual trips with a normal size stocking truck to equal one trip with the Regional Distribution Unit. An average load of 5-inch fish on the Regional Distribution Unit numbers 124,110 fish weighing 6,300 pounds.

VISITORS WELCOME

A small Visitor Center and a picnic area are located at the Hotchkiss National Fish Hatchery headquarters. This Visitor Center is open from 7:30 to 4:00 daily.

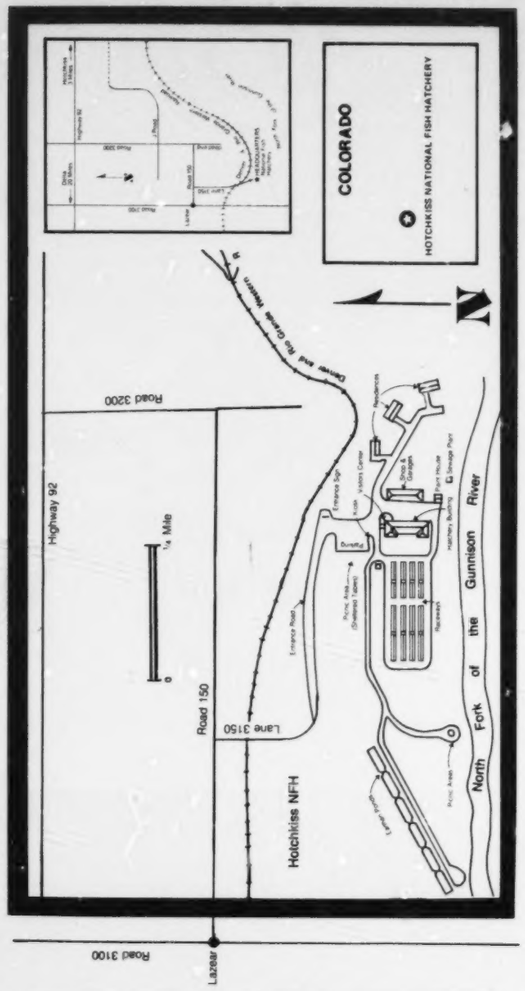
Hotchkiss National Fish Hatchery is a part of a system of nearly 75 Federal hatcheries operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service nationwide. Changes in land and water uses, as well as angling pressure, make it necessary to give nature a helping hand. Stocking of fish from Federal and State hatcheries provides good fishing for millions of people.

For further information, write to:

Hatchery Manager
Hotchkiss National Fish Hatchery
807-3150 Lane
Hotchkiss, Colorado 81419

or phone (303) 872-3170

Stocking a lake with trout.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Department of the Interior

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